(c) if not, what is the point in giving ration cards to the rich and wealthy when they do not use them; and

(d) whether Government intends to study this problem in great details ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) and (b) The Central Government is not considering any proposal to adivse the State Governments not to issue or withdraw, if issued, ration cards to any category of citizens.

(c) and (d) Operational decisions for implementing the PDS such as issue of ration cards are matters under the administrative juridsiction of the State Governments/UT Administrations. The Advisory Council on PDS in its meeting held in March, 1993 set up a Committee of State Ministers for formulating recommendations regarding a National Policy on PDS focussing on the need to ensure larger and more meaningful quantitites of PDS commodities to the needy and deserving sections. One of the recommendations made by the Committee of State Ministers is a follows :—

"In order to ensure that larger and more meaningful quantities of foodgrains reach the relatively needy and poorer sections it is inescapable that the relatively better off sections of the population are excluded from access to the PDS in respect of foodgrains". The Committee of State Ministers has not made any recommendation regarding non-issue or withdrawal of ration cards from any category of citizens. The Central Government has not taken any decision on the report of the Committee of Ministers. No specific time frame can be given in this regard.

Action against hoarders of foodgrains

3609. DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR : Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) how many drives were undertaken in 1993-94 against hoarders of foodgrains ;

(b) whether such drives had any effect on the prices of foodgrains ;

(c) what instructions were issued by the Central Government to the State Governments with respect to these drives; and

(d) whether the drives will be further continued ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) The information is maintained calendar year wise and not financial year-wise. The same is listed below :

Year	No. of raids made	No. of persons arrested	No. of persons prosecuted	No. of persons convicted
1993	11288	3579	4959	2854
1994 (upto 3-9-94)	819	216	77	251

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The Central Government from time to time has exhorted the states to remain vigilant and step up enforcement operations and intensify action to check malpractices like hoarding, profiteering and blackmarketing. At the same time, the Central Government has impressed upon the State/U.T. Governments that they should be very careful and selective in the matter of launching prosecution and should not resort to prosecution in cases of small and technical offences where departmental actions can be taken.

(d) Yes, Sir.

Publication of the cost of Production on the packed commodities

3610. DR. SHRIKANT RAMCHANDRA JICHKAR : Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are considering a proposal to make the declaration and publication of the cost of production of commodities on the packages of the various consumer commodities ;

(b) if so, what is the exact proposal ;

(c) how far it will help in generating the consciousness in the public about the prices to be paid are not too high than the cost of production ; and

(d) whether some scientific format for calculating cost of production will be evolved lest producers wrongly show exhorbitant cost of production to keep prices high ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED) (a) to (d) There has been a strong feeling expressed in the press and elsewhere that the actual sale prices of a number of prepacked commodities are far less than the price printed on the package. As the issue involved is complicated requiring a deeper study on a number of points like the element of freight, taxes, commission payable the type of retail shop where the product is sold etc., the Ministry has constituted an expert committee to recommend to the Government the best method of declaration of sale price on the packages.

Mobile ration distribution centres in Andhra Pradesh

3611. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO : Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government propose to use mobile ration distribution centres for Public Distribution System items in remote villages;

(b) if so, details thereof ;

(c) the areas selected in Andhra Pradesh for this purpose; and

(d) by when it will be implemented ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS & PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) To supplement the efforts of the States/UTs to introduce mobile fair price shops to cover the consumer residing in hilly, remote, far-flung, desert, tribal and inaccessible areas, Central Government has been providing financial assistance for the purchase of vans to be operated as mobile fair price shops.